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MASSIVE ₹7,853CR PROJECT TO REDEVELOP ICONIC STADIUM

Sports ministry initiates plan to redevelop Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium in Delhi under public-private partnership model

TARGET OLYMPICS AND MORE

Sports ministry wants to upgrade the stadium into a facility that can host not just international competitions, but also a venue that could be ready to host Olympics in the near future. The project will be executed with private sector partnership by leveraging the mixed/real estate development available around the sprawling complex | P13

ADDITIONAL SPORTS, EXTRA ZING

- The feasibility study of Ernst & Young suggests to add facilities for basketball, badminton, tennis, swimming, cycling
- There could be new housing complexes to be used as service apartments and sports hostels
- Sports retail shops, food court and recreational centres proposed

102 acres
AREA OF LAND ON WHICH THE STADIUM COMPLEX IS SITUATED

CHENNAI • MADURAI • VIJAYAWADA • BENGALURU • KOCHI • HYDERABAD • VISAKHAPATNAM • COIMBATORE • KOZHIKODE • THIRUVANANTHAPURAM • BELAGAVI • BHUBANESWAR • SHIVAMOGGA • MANGALURU • TIRUPATI • TRICHY • TIRUNELVELI • SAMBALPUR • HUBBALLI • DHARMAPURI • KOTTAYAM • KARIMUR • VILLUPURAM • KOLLAM • WARANGAL • TADEPALLIGUDEM • NAGAPATTINAM • THRISSUR • KALABURAGI

K'taka to stay the course despite U-turn by WHO

Though the state has 97% of asymptomatic cases, minister says there will be no change in strategy after world body changes stand

RAMU PATIL @Bengaluru

KARNATAKA, which has officially said that at least 97 per cent of its 3,108 active Covid-19 cases are asymptomatic, will continue with its strategies for tackling the pandemic despite the World Health Organisation now saying that asymptomatic patients can spread the infection. The WHO is facing flak for its flip-flop in the fight against Covid-19, specially after it retracted its earlier observation that asymptomatic patients cannot spread the infection.

The number of Covid-19-positive cases in Karnataka suddenly spiked over the last few days after the influx of migrants from high-prevalence states, including Maharashtra. In many districts, including Udupi, which saw a sudden surge in cases, asymptomatic individuals were sent home from institutional quarantine almost a week before their test results returned positive, thereby increasing the risk of them spreading the virus among members of their families and the community, especially senior citizens.

Admitting that people were sent home before the test results arrived, a Health Department official said they were admitted to hospital after their report came positive, almost a week after they were sent home. This was done based on Central guidelines.

Medical Education Minister Dr K Sudhakar, who is at the forefront of Karnataka's fight against the pandemic, however was more cautious. "It is good news that more than 97 per cent of the active cases are asymptomatic. But there is no conclusive evidence that asymptomatic patients don't transmit infection, nor is there any way to differentiate between pre-symptomatic and asymptomatic ones. We must continue to keep vigil," he said.

"The WHO should have concluded the study before making statements, as everyone is already in panic. Their intention may have been good and they may have said it to spread positive vibes, but they should have waited for studies to be concluded on this," he told TNIE.

However, Dr Sudhakar and Dr M K Sudharshan, Chairman, Karnataka Covid-19 Technical Advisory Committee, felt that the chances of asymptomatic patients spreading the virus are remote. "Let us have trust and confidence in our expertise and faith in our government, let us believe in our local data. Our final decision will be based on this," Dr Sudarshan said.

The minister iterated that despite the WHO flip-flop, the government will continue taking precautions and there will be no change in its disease management strategy, as all aspects have been factored in. P4

AATMA NIRBHAR ON THE FIELD

A retired serviceman from the armed forces ploughs a lone furrow using traditional farming techniques in his farm in Belagavi on Wednesday | ASHISHKRISHNAH P

Major Generals exchange ideas, more talks lined up on Sino-Indian stand-off

MAYANK SINGH AND PUSHKAR BANAKAR @ New Delhi

A day after Indian and Chinese troops partially retreated along the Line of Actual Control (LAC), bilateral Major General-level talks were held on Wednesday, a senior Army official said.

According to sources, both sides exchanged views, which will be reviewed at a senior level. Wednesday's meeting went on for more than four-and-a-half hours, sources said.

"More meetings are lined up in future, both at the Division Commander and Sector Commander levels, to flesh out specific details and arrive at a de-escalation plan. These meetings will culminate in the Corps Commander-level meeting," sources added.

Meanwhile, the Chinese foreign ministry said that both sides were trying to ease the situation following diplomatic and military talks. "Recently, India and China held effective communication though diplomatic and military channels and reached a positive consensus. The two sides are following this consensus to take actions to ease the situation along the borders," Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Hua Chunying said.

Indian and Chinese troops have been involved in a stand-off since the intervening night of May 5 and 6 after troops from the People's Liberation Army (PLA) attacked Indian soldiers between Finger 4 and Finger 5 positions near the LAC. The Indian Army retaliated, leading to injuries to large number of personnel from both sides.

Following the escalation of tensions, Corps Commander-level talks were held on June 6. The dialogue was held between Lt General Harinder Singh, commander of the 14 Corps, and Major General Liu Lin, commander of the South Xinjiang Military Region, at Moldo on the Chinese side.

The Chinese foreign ministry last week had said the situation along the LAC was stable and controllable.

6,041 TOTAL CASES AS ON WEDNESDAY

KARNATAKA COVID-19 BATTLE

120 Test Positive on Wednesday

69 Total Deaths

2,862 Total Recoveries so far

FROM ACROSS THE STATE

- Two patients die in Bengaluru Urban, while Dharwad sees one fatality
- Kalyana Karnataka logs 102 recoveries, of the state's total of 257 during the day
- University of Mysore opens Covid-19 cell to address students' grievances

RELIEF FOR KIDS

No online classes up to Class 5, says govt

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@Bengaluru

PRIMARY and Secondary Education Minister S Suresh Kumar on Wednesday ordered schools to cancel online classes from kindergarten up to Class 5 with immediate effect, and directed them not to collect any additional fees for the virtual classes.

He made the announcement at a virtual press conference on Wednesday evening, following concerns raised by parents and educationists over online classes for children of these classes, and schools charging additional fees for the classes held online due to Covid-19.

Kumar said experts had come to the conclusion that online classes cannot be an alternative to the education being provided to children through direct teaching. "The objective of education is not to complete the syllabus, but to improve the knowledge of children," he said.

The minister also announced that a committee of experts has been constituted to frame guidelines for engaging children of pre-primary and primary schools in the learning process until classes resume.

Several experts had pointed out the ills of online classes for schoolchildren at an age when they need to develop their motor and social skills, rather than screen-based online education.

INS Vikrant hard disk theft case solved, 2 held

TOBY ANTONY @ Kochi

IN a major breakthrough in its probe into last year's theft of computer hardware from Indigenous Aircraft Carrier Vikrant, which is under construction at the Cochin Shipyard, the National Investigation Agency (NIA) arrested two persons on Tuesday night. Dayaram Sinkariya and Sumit Kumar, who were nabbed from Rajasthan and Bihar, would be brought to Kochi soon, said NIA officers.

"We had collected fingerprints of nearly 10,000 people who work or had worked in the shipyard. Over 1,000 were questioned and their mobile networks traced, after which we could identify the suspects. We obtained a search warrant from the NIA Court in Kochi on Monday and three teams were sent to Rajasthan, Gujarat and Bihar," said an officer.

The duo was produced in courts in Rajasthan and Bihar, and transit warrants were obtained. "The recovery of the stolen hardware was carried out. Some equipment are yet to be recovered," said a source.

The two were engaged by a contractor for painting work at the shipyard. "They have been working here since early 2019. They stayed together in Kochi and hatched the conspiracy," the source added.

The theft came to light on September 13, 2019 after the trial run of the IAC's Integrated Platform Management System. Six RAMs of three computers, besides three processors and as many hard disks, all worth ₹2.1 lakh, were stolen.

Initially, the city police investigated the case, which was later handed over to the NIA.

EXPRESS READ

Economy to grow at 9.5% next year: Fitch

New Delhi: After contraction this fiscal, India's economy is forecast to bounce back with a growth rate of 9.5 per cent next year, if it can avoid further deterioration in financial sector health, Fitch Ratings said.

M12

MICROSOFT'S VENTURE FUND 'M12' SETS UP SHOP IN B'LURU

The new facility will look at pursuing investment opportunities in B2B software startups across various IT-related sectors.

P12

Cheque bouncing, loan repayment delays could soon be decriminalised

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ New Delhi

TO help businesses tide over financial difficulties caused by the nationwide lockdown, the Centre plans to decriminalise minor economic offences such as cheque bounce and delays in repayment of loans.

To make this happen, as many as 19 pieces of legislation will have to be suitably amended. These include the Negotiable Instruments Act (cheque bounce), SARFAESI Act (repayment of bank loans), LIC Act, PFRDA Act, RBI Act, NHB Act, Banking Regulation Act and Chit Funds Act.

The Finance Ministry has shared its proposal and invited public comments from all stakeholders. Based on the feedback, the Department of Financial Services will take a call on whether a particular section should be modified to decriminalise to improve ease of doing business.

19 laws up for revamp

Negotiable Instruments Act, SARFAESI Act, LIC Act, PFRDA Act, RBI Act, NHB Act, Banking Regulation Act, Chit Funds Act, Insurance Act, and NABARD Act are among the 19 laws that the finance ministry has proposed to amend

Till now, the accused in such small offences faced fine or imprisonment or both depending on the gravity of the charges. With the changes, the Finance Ministry aims to create a system wherein a penalty levied is sufficient to act as a deterrent and will help in "improving business sentiment and unclogging court processes" in the wake of the economic crisis caused due to lockdown.

For instance, under existing law, violating the provisions of the RBI Act, such as inviting deposits without authorisation or avoiding registration, could attract imprisonment plus a fine of up to ₹25 lakh. If these offences are decriminalised, the fine will be be raised but there will be no imprisonment.

The move was already announced by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman in the Aatma Nirbhar Bharat package.

"Criminalising procedural lapses and minor non-compliances increase burden on businesses," the Finance Ministry said in a statement.

RS PICK EFFECT

100 Legislative Council hopefuls pop up from BJP's Pandora's box

ASHWINI M SRIPAD & K SHIVA KUMAR @Bengaluru/Mysuru

THESE days there has been a continuous knock, knock at the BJP office. Ever since the Delhi bosses gave tickets to party workers for the Rajya Sabha, stressing on cadres, aspirations seem to be running high for tickets for the Legislative Council polls scheduled for June 29.

Of the 12 seats (seven vacancies and five to be nominated), BJP can get nine, and at least 100 ticket hopefuls seem to have approached the party head office in Bengaluru.

With its surprise decision of giving ticket to party cadres Eranna Kadadi and Ashok Gasti, the BJP seems to have opened a Pandora's box. While this move to reward the grassroot workers has brought them cheer, some biggies like A H Vishwanath and M T B Nagaraj who joined the BJP last year, who were hoping to take the Council route to become ministers, seem to be apprehensive.

Although Chief Minister B S Yediyurappa has assured them in this regard, the RS list seems to have come as a shocker to them.

In the Legislative Council, election will be held for seven seats with the term of Naseer Ahmed, Jayamma, M C Venugopal, N S Bose Raju, H M Revanna, T A Saravana, and D U Mallikarjuna ending on June 30. With 117 MLAs, BJP can get four seats (they need 28 MLAs' vote for MLC).

This apart, the State Government can appoint five nominated members, who will also be from the ruling BJP.

Speaking to *The New Indian Express*, state Tourism Minister and senior BJP member C T Ravi said that at least 100 aspirants had approached the BJP office, seeking ticket for the Upper House.

"We are eligible to get nine seats and after scrutiny, the core committee in the State will decide and send it to the National core committee which will decide on the names," the minister said.

Asked if there will be any disappointment or more unhappy members, Ravi said like for Rajya Sabha, the core committee will select the best and eligible candidates.

Another senior minister on the condition of anonymity said that unlike in 2009, when BJP was in power only in the state, this time the party is in power both at the Centre and in the State.

We are eligible to get nine seats and after scrutiny, the core committee in the state will decide and send it to the National core committee which will decide on the names

C T Ravi, Karnataka Tourism Minister

CONTINUED ON: P3